



**Jonnycake Center
For Hope**
here to help

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for H5456, H5687, Article 16 – Related to increasing resources for affordable housing

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Jonnycake Center for Hope supports H5687, H5456, and Article 16 of the Governor's Budget to increase resources for affordable housing production and preservation.

The Center provides basic needs, resources, and hope to more than 2,000 South County residents every year. A lack of affordable housing is among the biggest challenges facing a large number of our member households. The South Kingstown and Narragansett housing markets are extremely tight. In addition to the housing challenges created by hosting a university and beach community, out-of-town residents are buying and renting properties from which they can now work remotely.

Families and seniors with deep roots in this community, many dating back centuries, are finding it difficult to afford to stay here. Every week we learn of families, including many Indigenous families, having to relocate out of the area because they cannot afford skyrocketing rents, and very few landlords in the area will accept a section 8 voucher. These families deserve to inhabit their homeland, preserve their heritage, and their grandchildren should be able to enjoy our strong education system, outdoor spaces, and close-knit community. Our local economy requires workers to support tourism and hospitality, health care for the aging, and our beloved agriculture and fishing industries. Without additional interventions, more and more of these families and workers will be forced out of town.

www.jonnycakecenter.org

1231 Kingstown Road, Peace Dale, RI 02879

p: 401-789-1559



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The Jonnycake Center has stepped up to help in a small way by purchasing four multi-unit dwellings and creating a "ready to rent" and landlord incentive program, but it is not enough. State and local governments need to do more to address this pressing problem.

We are encouraged by these proposals and look forward to their passage.

Thank you,

Kate Brewster
Chief Executive Officer
Jonnycake Center for Hope

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